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Clinton Approves Intelligence Spending Rise

Bill Is Also Signed to Make Theft of Trade Secrets a Federal Crime

Associated Press

President Clinton signed a bill yesterday that boosts intelligence agency spending and another that makes theft of trade secrets a federal crime.

Clinton said he signed the 1997 Intelligence Authorization Act despite objections to three provisions, including one that establishes three new assistant directors of central intelligence under CIA Director John M. Deutch.

Although the nation's intelligence budget is an official secret, it is reported to total about \$30 billion for the 1997 fiscal year, up 4.9 percent from 1996.

In a statement, Clinton said he would support Deutch in asking the next Congress to repeal the provision that created assistant directors for intelligence collection, analysis and administration. "I share his concern that these provisions will add

another layer of positions requiring Senate confirmation" without a corresponding increase in the CIA director's authority to manage the intelligence agencies, Clinton said.

The bill:

- Gives the FBI power to subpoena local telephone records.
- Authorizes the CIA and the National Security Agency to collect data on foreign citizens abroad for U.S. investigations.
- Requires Senate confirmation of the CIA's general counsel. That is meant to prevent political influence over a position designed to block illegal covert operations.
- Prohibits federal employment of senior intelligence officials for three years after their departure from government.

It also prohibits the CIA from using American journalists as spies. But the restriction could be waived in extraordinary circumstances and

the CIA still could have its agents pose as journalists. The bill would not prohibit journalists who choose to provide information from doing so.

Clinton also signed into law the Economic Espionage Act of 1996, saying it strengthens protections against theft or misuse of proprietary business information. "It will help us crack down on acts like software piracy and copyright infringement that cost American businesses billions of dollars in lost revenues," he said. The law makes the theft of trade secrets a federal crime and provides financial penalties and prison sentences for specific acts of economic espionage. It also preserves the confidentiality of trade secrets in court proceedings.

Clinton said the measure also eliminates gaps in the criminal laws that cover attacks against computers and the information they contain.